

LOWELL OFFERING.

JULY, 1845.

A VISIT IN THE COUNTRY.

IN the spring of the year 18—no matter when—I visited the country town of my childhood. On my arrival I stopped at a neighbor's house in the immediate vicinity, and within eye-exploring distance of the spot that I once delighted to designate my own "home, sweet home." But I have told you about that much-loved place in a preceding article, so I will hasten along with my story. While at the house where I established my head-quarters, while visiting the "country gentry," I was invited to visit a *very* old-fashioned family, that dwelt in a secluded nook, far from the sound of the village bell, and the lumbering teams on the main road. I accepted the invitation through a threefold inducement, namely, to be gracious to the giver, to gratify my curiosity, and to obey the dictates of duty, for I had promised my mother, before leaving home, that I would "go and see Uncle Jenkins's folks, because they were always such clever neighbors."

This family in their domestic doings was a perfect copy of the first edition of New England settlers. The cobwebs of bygone days had not been swept from their dwelling by their intercourse with modern customs and the march of improvement. It seemed to be a matter of choice that they lived thus isolated from the commotions that convulse the world without. The wrangling politician seldom visited their domicils, or, if he did, was silent upon his favorite theory; and the promoter of a new fangled doctrine also stood aloof, for there he found no convert to his dogmas, thus leaving them to enjoy the forms and ceremonies of religion transmitted to them by their forefathers "under their own vines and fig trees, with none to molest or make them afraid."

It was a happy home. "Let not grandeur hear with a disdainful smile" while I describe to you the residence of "Uncle Jenkins" and his interesting progeny. The house was one of those ancient-looking ones of which there are many yet to be seen in the Granite state—palpable specimens of the rustic taste and carpentership of our forefathers. It was one story in height, and spread out so capaciously on *terra firma* that it seemed as though it had been patted down till the roof rested upon the window frames, and thus impeded in its "downward road" could settle no further.

It had never been painted by mortal hands, yet, through the instrumentality of those "artists of the upper region," it had assumed the dun color of accumulated ages. Contiguous to this was a prodigious long ell, pointing out towards the north star, which afforded a comfortable residence for Levi Jenkins, Jun., and his portly spouse, with a trio of "olive plants" that clustered around their domestic board. Every thing about the premises bore the indications of old age, without being shabby. The stone walls and board fences were covered with a thick coating of yellow moss, and the trees had such an ancient look that they reminded you of spectacles, wrinkles and gray hairs. If Fanny Kemble and Dickens, who manifested a disposition to find fault with the newness of things in these "regions," had seen this time-honored domicil, I think they would acknowledge that there are some things even here that have a squint of the olden time.

But I must go on and tell you about my visit. One pleasant afternoon found me on my "winding way" to the residence I have attempted to describe. I met, as I anticipated, a cordial welcome from "Aunt Levi," who greeted me at the door with a hearty shake of the hand, and a look of complacent pleasure in her little gray eyes that spoke volumes of un-forgotten and time-hallowed friendship. The door, through which I was ushered, was an old creaking rickety concern, with a large tow string dangling outside which was fastened to a wooden latch upon the inside, readily reminding you of the song where

"Jack stepped up and pulled the string,
And she came down and let him in," &c.

Permit me to introduce you to "Aunt Levi," and then I will tell you about her parlor, or rather "west room," as they were wont to designate it. Aunt Levi was about sixty years of age, and looked as though she might have been mistaken for an old maid. This peculiar look, which none but an idiot can fail to observe, no doubt was imputable to the fact that she lived a life of single blessedness near fifty years. She was Uncle Levi's second wife. She wore a cap starched and "done up" with the utmost neatness, and her silvery threaded locks were parted on her ample brow with all the proverbial nicety of old maidishness. The blue skirt and "long-short" were exchanged for a rock-moss-colored flannel dress, and the checked woollen apron was laid aside for one of homespun linen.

Now let me tell you about the fixtures of the parlor. The floor was nicely sanded, and a bright fire was blazing in the old-fashioned fireplace, which we cannot pass without noticing. It was not more remarkable for its width from jam to jam than for its prodigious depth, which was five or six feet. What could induce our progenitors to construct such immense fireplaces is to modern comprehension a marvel. If it had been a sky-gazing age, the problem would find a solution in the fact that you could seat yourself in the chimney corner, and look at the stars as they sparkle in the cerulean deep; but this was not the case—they were deplorably wanting in a love for all that constitutes the beautiful and sublime. One thing is certain; that is, they did not appreciate domestic economy in the article of fuel. At one corner of this mammoth fireplace sat puss, purring away like happiness itself, and at the other reposed the dog that had grown gray with age. I remarked that the dog looked natural, when I was informed that he had suffered much by the *rheumatis* through the winter, and had been hardly able to go out doors.

In one corner of the room was a *beaufet*, which contained the most antique specimens of ware that I have ever seen. In another corner was a bed made up with the exactness of a skillful geometrician, on which were sheets and pillow-cases of homespun linen, so very white and smooth that they made me feel drowsy. At the head of the bed hung the warming-pan, which, perchance, had occupied the same place for ages; yet it was so bright that it sparkled like a star. Near this hung an ingeniously wrought basket, such that I have never seen its fellow, in which Aunt Levi kept her patches and darning balls. Between the front windows was a looking-glass that old granny Jenkins's mother had when she was married, and under this was a table of the most obsolete style conceivable. It was round when the leaves were spread, and of gigantic dimensions, yet so narrow when they were let down that Uncle Levi could hardly lay the big Bible on it. This wonderful table was supported by a legion of feet and legs, turned off with the most elaborate workmanship of the "olden time." Behind the entry door was a round hole expressly for the accommodation of puss. Near this was a high chest of drawers that reached from floor to ceiling. There was a clock in the room that went tick-tock, tick-tock, as it measured off the seconds, minutes and hours of the present for the dim chronicle of the past. On the face of this was a representation of Night's gracious queen, which had waxed and waned from time immemorial. Levi Junior's wife soon joined us, and enlivened the scene with her happy countenance and sprightly conversation. We seated ourselves before the blazing fire to knit and talk as fast as we could make our needles and tongues fly. Among the happiest moments of my existence I shall ever regard the brief season spent with those good ladies at their domestic hearth.

It may be a strong assertion to you, my dear readers, who are accustomed to spacious drawing-rooms, Turkey carpets, sofas, pier-tables, pianos, and all the *et cæteras* of wealth and fashion, but, let me tell you, these trappings, which adorn the halls of opulence, do not confer happiness to be compared with that which is found in the quiet cottager's home. There was a blending in this family of republican simplicity and home-felt enjoyment, so that the very air, within and without, seemed redolent with domestic contentment and "rural felicity." After we had chatted awhile we went into grandma'am Jenkins's room to see her. The dear old lady had not been apprised of my vicinity; so, to let me see how well she retained her faculties, it was proposed that I should speak to her without the ceremony of an introduction. When I inquired after her health she caught hold of my dress, shaded her eyes with her shrunken hand, and ejaculated, "Who in the name of the old cat is it? You look *desput nateral*, but I can't call you by name." As soon as Aunt Levi told her my name she exclaimed, "Hoity-toity! hoity-toity!—I am *desput* glad to see you." She had a cargo of questions to ask about my folks, and if I remembered when I used to sit on the block in the corner to hear her tell stories—did I remember when I fell from the cherry-tree, and how *desputly* my nose bled when they carried me into the house, &c., &c.

The young lady left us to perform some culinary duty, when Aunt Levi commenced her search, in chests and drawers, for genuine relics of antiquity with which to regale my senses. She was not very conversant with the gossip of the neighborhood, and feared no doubt that my spirits would flag for the want of variety; so, to give a new impulse to the scene,

she spread out before me the habiliments of a buried race. "Calamink," poplin, brocade and damask dresses, with immense trails, were presented to view. Then came mantles, whimples, crimping-pins, fine linen hood and veils, "ruffs, puffs and farthingales;" also all sorts of "tinkling ornaments," such as knee-buckles, ear jewels, wristband buttons, bracelets, &c.

The next episode in the afternoon's entertainment was my interview with the juvenile members of the family. As soon as they were returned from school their faces were washed, heads combed slick as a mouse, and then were led in by their mother, an interesting trio indeed, Sarah, Enoch and Elesiah. The youngest was regarded by the whole family as very remarkable for his precocity. In their eagerness to make a man of him at once they had hurried him into a "long-tailed-blue," though he was but about three years of age, and very dwarfish at that. This *manish* garment made him cut the most ludicrous figure of the kind that I ever saw. Indeed he might have been taken for a dressed monkey if seen at a back view in the road. This was the little *manny*. I was told repeatedly that he was worth "forty-'leven thousand dollars, 'cause he had two eyes in his face, and he had ears, and a nose, and fingers, and toes, and *every sing*, and he was a little *manny*, every inch of him." He could repeat several nursery songs, such as "Ding dong bell, the cat's in the well," "Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater," "Goosey, goosey gander," &c. He could also count ten, and sometimes get as high as twenty by the simple process of skipping a part of the intervening teens.

Then came Enoch with his primers, tops and balls, and Sarah with her sampler, patchwork and writing-book. I had to compliment them with the prettiest speeches that I could manufacture, and I am ever horribly awkward at every thing in the line of "baby talk;" however, I lived through it.

Supper was now announced, and Uncle Levi was called from the field to partake of the good things prepared by his notable dame. Should you like to know how he looked? Fancy to yourself the old hero that Holmes had in his mind's eye when he wrote,

"I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches—and all that
Are so queer."

After we had supped, the chickens, ducks, turkeys, pigs and goslings had to be fed. I had great curiosity to know what they had in the chamber, so, when Aunt Levi went up to get meal for the "dough dish," I followed on, and commenced my search in that quarter. On one side of the chamber was a row of barrels filled with grain, and on the other side was a long chest. I could not, for the life of me, conjecture what they could do with such an *unaccountable* huge chest, but on raising the lid I found it to be their receptacle for beans. Aunt Levi apologized for not having a greater quantity. She said that they generally had beans to sell in the spring, but last year they were struck by the frost, and then the sheep got in and trampled them down, so that they had only eleven *booshels* when they were winnowed up. There was a loom in the chamber at one end, and a quill-wheel; at the other end, the warping-bars and spool-frame.

When the occupants of the poultry-yard were fed and housed, and the

"work done up," we all assembled ourselves in the long kitchen for evening devotions. This was in the first part of the evening, on account of old grandma'am Jenkins, who wished to retire early. "Old Hundred" was the tune selected and sung on the occasion. Then the

"Sire turned o'er wi' patriarchal grace
The big ha' bible ance his father's pride,"

and read a portion therefrom. This was followed by a prayer, which, if not eloquent, I trust was sincere.

As I happened to be seated near the door which led into the old lady's room I heard her rake up her fire, wing her hearth, and then get into bed. When she had got fairly cuddled down in the feathers, she commenced saying her prayers.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul"—

Here she stopped short, and ejaculated in a fit of hearty vexation, "O Lordy massy suz alive! if I haint come to bed with my specs on!" The old lady mustered and laid aside her spectacles, then recommenced her prayers and went through with them, which was the last I heard of her that night. Poor dear old lady! she is dead and gone, and I really believe has gone to heaven, for she certainly was a Christian, though she did go to bed with her *specs* on.

The remainder of the evening was spent in Levi Junior's room, where we had apples, beer, walnuts and "hard cider." Before parting for the night, Levi Junior, like "Old King Cole, a jolly old soul," called upon me for a song. I gave him two—"Fanny Gray" and "Rory O'Moore," which he paid back by singing the "Ship Carpenter," one of Uncle Peter's songs, and one about

"Dick the joiner lad—a joiner to a station,
Who courted Nell, as handsome a gal as any in the nation,"

if we may rely upon the verity of the song.

Perhaps you would like to know more about this specimen of ancient songology, so I will tell you. Nell, it seems, was a bit of a coquette; to be sure she told Dick that she loved him best of any body under "the canopy of heaven," but he inferred, as well he might from her habits of flirtation, that she told others the same story; so he managed to try the strength of her affections in a disguised *tete-a-tete*. This was done by dressing himself in female attire and letting himself for a servant in her father's family. They became familiar, as young ladies sometimes are with their female domestics, and in a precious colloquy which they held one evening,

"She told him of her sweetheart, all how she had slighted many,
And she told of Dick the joiner lad—she loved him the best of any."

Now this was just what Dick wanted to know, and the emergency of the case will half-justify the stratagem by which he accomplished his purpose. I have forgotten a part of the song, but believe it ends in matrimony, after the fashion of a novel.

The next morning I took leave of my friends amid a profusion of kind wishes, and, with a kindred feeling, I will now take leave of my reader.

M. R. G.

MY SISTER'S GRAVE.

"Oft as I haunt the dreary gloom
That gathers round the peaceful tomb
I love to see the lightning stream
Along thy stone, with fitful gleam,
To fancy in each flash are given
Thy spirit's visitings from Heaven;
And smile—to hear the tempest rave
Above my sister's quiet grave!"

My sister!—it seems but yesterday since she was with us, though the flowers of ten summers have bloomed above the humble mound which shows her last earthly resting-place. She was a being formed to be loved, though she was not what the world would call beautiful. To the stranger there was nothing to excite interest, or attract observation; but, to those who knew her, the quiet, gentle disposition and unassuming manners which she possessed, were far more lovely than the beauty of a Peri. Secluded as we were from the temptations of the city, she had no wish to mingle in its gay scenes. Her home was her elysium, and she had no interest beyond its precincts. She felt that it was her duty, as the eldest child, to set an example for the younger members of the family; and it was from this circumstance, that she acquired the staid and matronly deportment which was so far beyond her years. She was passionately fond of reading, and of poetry particularly; and the short poetic effusions, which she occasionally penned, showed that her choice had not been misplaced; and, though written in a simple style, yet the buds showed what the flowers would have been.

But she was not long to be permitted to remain with us, and, ere sixteen years had passed over her, we saw that her days were numbered. She strove to appear cheerful, and her countenance wore the same smile that it had been wont to do, but it had a more saddened expression, and the hollow cough, and hectic flush, told us too truly that she was the victim of consumption. Weeks and months passed away, and her seventeenth birth-day arrived. It was a beautiful morning; the sun shining upon my face awoke me, and, after dressing myself, I went to my sister's chamber, as I had been accustomed to do for some days, for her indisposition confined her mostly to her room. As I entered I perceived that the inmates were in tears; I crept softly to my mother's side, and looked up into her face. A strange foreboding of evil came over me, and, hurrying away, I sat down and gave vent to my grief. Soon after, a lady came to me, and, taking me by the hand, led me to my sister's bedside. I scarcely dared to breathe lest I should disturb her repose. Her light-brown hair floated in disordered masses upon the pillow, while the bright spot upon her cheek, which, ever and anon, succeeded the death-like pallor, showed that her repose was painful. Presently she opened her eyes and a faint smile flitted across her features. They hastened to her bedside. Her lips moved, and, with a scarcely breathed "Farewell," her gentle spirit took its flight. I was very young then, but the impression which that scene made upon my mind will never be effaced.

They buried her beneath the bending branches of a beautiful willow; a murmuring rivulet chants her requiem, and the white-rose tree, which

she planted with her own hands, casts its yearly tribute upon her grave. When the tumultuous tide of passion has risen in my bosom, I have gone to her lowly grave, and poured upon it my tears of repentance and shame, and peace has come to my grieved and wounded spirit, and exerted a chastening and subduing influence over me.

Farewell, sweet sister ; we meet not again on earth, but there is a world where sorrow and death are unknown, and there I trust thy pure spirit dwells. May I be permitted to meet thee there ; and, when this frail tenement of clay is dissolved, may my earthly remains be deposited beside thy quiet grave.

*A. L.

THE HEART'S TRIAL.

TWILIGHT deepened into night ; and, as the shades of evening gathered around, the pale gentle stars came forth, exerting their holy and subduing influence upon the heart. The summer breeze, laden with the sweet perfume of flowers, moved, with fairy-like tread, through the leafy forest. Earth was beautiful ; clothed in Nature's fairest robes. Hard is it to turn from loveliness like this, to scenes of pain and suffering. But it is ever thus ; sorrow, suffering and sin mingling with joy, hope and virtue ; crushed and bleeding hearts concealed beneath a smiling exterior, moving quietly along, amid festivity and mirth. The brightest picture may be shadowed over, and the sunniest spot possess a darkened side.

So it was with Rosa Elton. Shadows began to gather around her, though in the morning of life, with hope bright and beautiful before her, and hearts warm and truthful around, where every pulsation seemed but for her happiness. A thousand ties, too strong for death to sever, bound her down to earth ; but it was not to be thus. The picture was too bright, too deeply tinged with earth, to let the mind rise heavenward. The night-lamp burned dimly on the stand, and the inmates of the sick-room moved with muffled tread around the apparently dying girl. Hearts were there almost bursting with grief, and the silence was often broken by sobs that could not be suppressed. The gentle spirit of Rosa was hovering between life and death, and seemed uncertain whither to take its flight. The cheek, white as the snowy pillow on which it rested, was cold and damp ; the long silken lashes, wet with tears, drooped heavily over the fading eye. Her thin pale hand was clasped in his, who had fondly hoped to call her wife ; and as he bent over her in speechless grief, and kissed her cold lips, she murmured, "Death is terrible !—Oh let me live !"

The crisis had come, life trembled, flickered in its fount, and seemed gone out forever. The struggle was long, but life triumphed over Death, and Rosa went forth from his dim shadowy portals, to the world she loved so well. A few months saw her a happy bride ; and years of unalloyed happiness rolled over her sunny brow. New ties sprung up—new links were added to the chain that bound her down to earth ; and Heaven was farther off, save the household heaven in which her heart was enshrined. That chain was now, for the first time, about to be shaken—its links loosed and eventually severed, and that heart was to bear its worst trial, the

giving up of its loved ones. The ever-patient, loving mother was first summoned to the spirit-land, and then the gray-haired father meekly bowed his head, and passed through the dark valley of shadows. Rosa wept burning tears over their flowery resting-place; and turned with increasing devotion to her idolized husband, and cherished babe.

Earth was still bright, and more ties must be severed ere the spirit could struggle upward. The angel Death, in kindness sent, again came, and bore away the cherub babe from its mother's fond embrace. Yet still there was left an earthly staff upon which to lean; and to it the bereaved mourner turned with a love stronger than death. But, as the messenger passed by, he laid his withering hand upon him, and the sunken eye, hollow cheek and faltering step paved the spirit's pathway to heaven. Rosa marked the change, and wept and prayed that the last tie might not be broken. But it could not be. Again the angel Death came and bore, on his sable pinions, the spirit home. The ties thus severed were woven amid the heart-strings of the sufferer, and when they loosed, like a broken reed that bends to the blast, the heart bowed in silent submission to its MAKER'S will.

Again the night-lamp burns dimly in the still room, and the pale cheek and throbbing brow press the pillow, but not as in former times. Then hearts, that thrilled to every wish of the sufferer, were there; now strangers must smooth the rugged way, and catch the last sigh of expiring nature. The spirit was struggling to be free, and a faint smile lighted up the features of Rosa, as far-off melody fell sweetly on her ear; and the shining angel band came to welcome her home to the loved and lost of earth.

J. L. B.

THE LADY ARABELLA.

HER light form resting on a lowly bed,
Wasted, but lovely still, a lady lay,
Rude was the cottage roof above her head;
Her country and her home were far away.

Her home? Oh no! *this* was her chosen home;
And one stood clasping now her pallid hand,
For whose sake, and for God's, she had become
A willing exile from her father-land.

The region all around was wild and new:
The ocean rolled before: the forest shade
Of dark, mysterious depth, a shelter threw,
O'er the few cabins clustered in the glade.

'T was early autumn; the declining ray
Of mellow sunlight, slanting to the shore,
Fell broad and beautiful upon the bay,
Whose waves were breaking with a dirge-like roar.

The lady's languid eyes beheld the glow
That on her tresses cast a golden stain,
Her pale lips moved. "Husband," she whispered low,
"Raise me to see the dying day again."

Gently he lifted then her weary head.
Sad was his heart;—he had but her and God.
He knew that she was sinking to the dead,
And his strong soul grew weak beneath the rod.

“My Arabella! oh! the blame is mine
For that deep hectic flush, that fading eye!
Far o’er the sea a princely home was thine,—
I brought thee to a wilderness—to die!”

“Beloved!” breathed again her liquid voice,
“I look not wishfully across the wave.
With thy dear glance upon me, I rejoice
To drop, unknown, into my forest grave.

“But not for thee alone did I forsake
Those halls where life flew like a summer day.
Had I not vowed my Savior’s cross to take,
And follow Him, however rough the way?

“I glory that amid this humble band
Of holy pilgrims, I am called to die.
In Heaven’s high courts theirs is an honored land.
Joy! for *our* record is with theirs on high!

“I love thee most because thou lovest Him
For whose pure faith and worship here we dwell.
His smile is on me while the world grows dim,
But ah! how can I say to *thee*, Farewell!

“No more with thee, beneath the azure dome,
Shall I send up the ‘hymn of lofty cheer,’
Nor, leaning on thine arm, yon wild woods roam
Where dusky faces through the branches peer.

“Never again our humble shepherd’s tones
Shall greet mine ear, nor soothe my fainting heart,
No more sweet converse with these exiled ones;—
Hark! angels call me, and I must depart!

“I know, beloved! how thy heart is wrung;
But God shall give thy widowed spirit peace.
Weep not; for thou wilt share my grave ere long;
And I will meet and welcome thy release.

“Then, hand in hand, to our new home we’ll soar;
Our white robes purified from every stain,
We’ll sit serenely down on Eden’s shore,
And never wander, never weep again!”

The last beam sank behind the dark pine trees
That stretched away from the low open door.
A faint sigh died away upon the breeze:—
The Lady Arabella spoke no more.

A few more autumn sunsets on the bay;—
But once the moon o’er the brown woodlands waned:
And, by his bride, the lonely stranger lay;—
His soul, with hers, a FATHER’S house had gained.

New-England’s soil hath garnered up their dust.
Still doth the ocean-spray their requiem weep,
The pilgrim-ashes! ’t is a glorious trust!
THE PILGRIM-SPIRIT! MAY IT NEVER SLEEP!

L. L.

H O M E .

SWEET home ! beloved place of my infancy, where first I lisped the dear names of mother and father, brother and sister, where first I was taught to admire the beauties around me ; well do I remember that cherished spot, where I roamed at will in the garden and the orchard. O ! those were halcyon days ! for then I knew no cares, no sorrow, all was bright and joyous before me. The very creature of impulse, laughing and crying by turns, as happened to be my humor. One moment chasing the gay butterfly from flower to flower, the next mourning over its untimely death. Not a few insects had a share of my tears, and a decent burial, and pebbles for grave-stones. Then the frogs, that lived in the brook hard by, shared considerably my attention ; for no sooner would they seat themselves upon the bank, in the warm sun, than they would have to hide their golden heads under the water just for my amusement.

Not far from my home stood the old school-house, where I coned over my lessons, or stood by the long-faced, stern-looking master, to read and spell, or, with others of his hopeful pupils, watched him, as he came in sight over a hill a little way off, then we would hasten away to our seats, to await his coming, with the gravity of sages.

But those days are over, and we are separated, both the teacher and the pupils ; some have found a resting place in the cold grave, others are in distant parts of the world, while a few of them are still living in the village. I visited the place of my birth, but how changed. I passed the school-house, but no familiar faces were there ; a new generation had arisen, and taken our places ; yet still I love my native town, for there are the graves of my parents, and the home of my childhood, though home to me no more.

ELIZABETH.

I A M N O T P O O R .

No, I am not poor, for, have I not wealth of affections pent up in my full heart, waiting occasion only, to burst forth, beautifying and fertilizing the desert of human existence. I have smiles and kind words of welcome, both, for the stranger and the unfortunate. Sympathy I have too for the mourner and the friendless ; not always wordy, it may be, but, radiating from the heart, it illuminates the whole being, brightening every feature, and speaking in every gesture. Words, the gentlest and sweetest, often sound harsh to an agonized heart ; not so a soft kiss, or gentle pressure of the hand—these will subdue, even to tears. Times there are—dark spots in our existence—when these silent tokens of sympathy thrill along the finer chords of our being with a melting, a subduing pathos.

I am not poor ; no, Nature with her inexhaustible stores of wealth and beauty are above, beneath and around me, inviting me to banquet at will. She amuses me with the glowing drapery of her hills and dales, her woods

and waters. She instructs me. Her lessons are written on creation's endless variety of forms, with a pencil of light. Every blade of grass, every nodding flower, every rolling stone, is a text-book of instruction. She raises and exalts me by the gorgeous beauty of her skies, when, in the majesty of might, the god of her idolatry rises to bless, or sinks smiling to rest. Her leaping cataracts, her belching volcanoes, her snow-clad, cloud-capt mountains sublime my soul to ecstasy. The far-off roll of her thunder fills me with a delicious awe. Then, how like a kind mother she nurses me, from sweet fountains in her breast, cradles me on her velvet turf, and lulls me to rest with the sweet melody of her winds and waters.

I am not poor!—no, health is mine, strengthened and invigorated by daily industry; and cheerfulness too, the result of a mind at peace with the world, with itself, and with God. How could it be otherwise, than that a mind exquisitely tuned to the harmonies of Nature should participate in her simplicity, purity, trustfulness and truth. And are not these the basis of all happiness.

I AM NOT POOR!—no, there are hearts true to me, who with the knowledge that I possess neither houses, nor lands, nor many of this world's goods—that to me are neither father, nor mother, nor home, yet who, with open arms, receive and welcome me as their own. O no; I am not friendless! a heaven of happy faces meet me at every turn, and smile God's blessing on me. I am not poor: aye, more—*I am rich* in possessing a capacity to see, to feel, and to appreciate beauty wherever found; and rich in a firm unshaken faith of a nobler, a better, and a holier existence beyond the grave. S. S.

MAY-DAY MUSINGS.

It has come at last, the long-anticipated day of flowers; and those, free to roam in search of nature's jewels, doubtless regret its dullness and gloom, and that the sun refuses to open, with the warmth of his beams, their bright petals. To me it matters not; yet for others' sakes I would it were warm and pleasant, fit even for a *May-day* walk. *My* ramblings are limited to the walls of a factory; yet, in thought, I wander to far other fields, and other forms and scenes surround me.

Memory guides me to the wide field of the past, and brings before me the May-day scenes now within its bounds. I think myself again with my childhood's playmates, our wanderings boundless, and footsteps free and unguided, save by fancy. We roamed whither we would, and our voices rang loud with unrestrained delight as each new-found flower was drawn from its hiding-place. I had almost wished "I were a child again." There was then no unhappiness; we had no perplexities, no sorrow. Nothing demanded care from us; no grave subject called for deep and serious thought; grief and anxiety had never chased far from us sleep and quiet. Time was naught to us; we knew not its use and worth. True, each moment came—we enjoyed it as it glided past, and forgot it in the succeeding one. We knew then no hours of sadness, of heart-sickness and gloom. If aught dimmed our happiness the kind voice of a fond mother was all powerful to drive it away.

But the halcyon days of childhood are now past, and lie far, far back from the present, in the vista of by-gone years. Many and variously spent have been the intervening May-days, yet one alone fills my thoughts this day. It was one year since; a day all unlike this—warm and brilliant. I was then more pleasantly engaged than now—at school in the pleasant village of L——, with dear friends and schoolmates. And, on that day, we walked together in quest of flowers. We roamed far, over streams, amid hills, dales and groves, and our voices rang forth merrily as it were in gladsomeness of heart. Not fruitless—or at least not *flowerless*—was our ramble; for Nature had not forgotten to deck the earth with many bright and beautiful flowers. We chose a green mound in the midst of a beautiful grove, for the coronation of our floral queen; and she was indeed our queen; the loveliest in heart and mind, and reigned in the hearts of her willing subjects. Never was a happier band than walked together that day. We were united; we loved each other with the warmth of school friends. We spent the day thus, in cheerful and friendly intercourse; and then receiving the thanks of our queen for our willing allegiance, we dispersed to our homes, with happy hearts, well pleased with the events of the pleasant day, all feeling that it would ever, when reverted to, call up pleasant thoughts.

'Tis changed now, and the members of that scholar-band are scattered, O how widely! Even in the far-off Arkansas, one of our number this day plucks the bright-hued flowers of a southern clime, while I am buried deep within the walls of a factory. Yet, though parted by distance, many, I ween, think now of that day as one of the happiest ever spent, and sigh for the presence of those friends with whom they held sweet communion in that May-day ramble. In *my* heart it will ever be cherished, a bright spot in memory's waste.

SERENA.

DAME NATURE.

DAME Nature has thrown off her robe of dull brown,
And decked her fair form, in a dress of rich green;
All painted with landscapes, surpassingly fair,
By the pen of an Artist, who never was seen.

Her brow is encircled with beautiful flowers,
Her jewels are dew-drops transparent and bright;
Throughout a whole day she seldom these wears,
And always by stealth puts them on over night.

For Sol is so jealous of bright gems she wears,
To humor his will she puts them away;
But next night when he sleeps she again puts them on,
And wears them, until he arises next day.

She appears quite coquettish for one of her years,
In this fanciful dress which she chooses to wear;
But in spite of the many hard winters she's seen,
There's not on her brow one wrinkle of care.

Her breath is all fragrance; her face is all smiles;
She's as merry a dame as ever was seen;
And all woo her beauty, the rich and the poor,
Whene'er she appears in her full dress of green.

MINERVA.

We do not like to write any thing which would seem like censure, especially upon a contribution written with the force and vivacity which characterizes "FIRST LOVE." But we have sometimes been censured for admitting articles into the Offering, which shocked the prejudices or principles of some of our patrons. One lady said to us, "I was not aware, myself, that there was any thing objectionable in the story, until I found myself compelled to hide that number of the Offering from my children." Now we should not forget that our magazine goes into many families where it is quite a favorite with the children. Nevertheless it is very different from a magazine which we should prepare for children, or for any set of readers, excepting those who wish for specimens of the different powers, tastes, educations, and *opinions* and *feelings*, of "factory girls." For this reason we like to give all the variety possible, and there is certainly something unique in this story. Let parents then read it first, and after that do as they choose about transferring it to their children.

We must say, in behalf of Mabel, that we think she was much more innocent when she committed the follies upon which in her introduction, she intimates that she looks back with regret and mortification, than she is now while indulging those regrets. And, if she does not, there may be those who look back upon their second or third love with quite as much uneasiness as upon their first—that is, if there are any of a nature sufficiently affectionate to love so many times.—ED.

"FIRST LOVE"! ALAS!

(Continued.)

OUR arrival was hailed with delight by the company, and for awhile, in our glee, I did not notice where, or how, Esq. Smith (as we all called him) had disposed of himself.

But soon observing that he was not present, I wandered into an adjoining room, where I found him resting his elbows upon a table, and his hands firmly clasped across his temples. A light stood near him, and I saw that his face was deeply flushed. As the pallor had left his countenance, I supposed that he must be better, and attributed the color in his face to the heat. Stealing as noiselessly from the room as I had entered, I proceeded to the keeping-room, where, possessing myself of a large pitcher of cold water, I immediately returned, and, before he was aware of my presence, dipped one of my hands into the water, and laid it upon the upper part of his forehead, which was exposed. I started as much as he did, for his head was burning.

"Thank you, thank you, Bel," said he; "that will relieve it." And putting his head out of the window, he bathed it freely. "What is the matter, Bel, that makes you look so pale?" he asked, as he sat the pitcher down, and turned towards me.

I had stood both speechless and motionless from the time my hand had touched his forehead, and when he spoke, I started and flung myself into his arms, sobbing with grief.

"What is the matter?" he inquired anxiously, as he turned my face towards his.

"You are sick, and will not let me get any thing from Mrs. Hoskins. Oh do!" I answered and petitioned stammeringly.

"You must not," he replied decidedly. "But cheer up, my sweet Bel, and when it is nine o'clock we will start for home. I will tell them that was the condition which your mother imposed upon her consent."

"But nine o'clock never will come," I persisted, still sobbing. "It is not eight yet."

"Yes it will," he returned with a pleasant smile. "Come, now go back to your young friends before they miss you, and before you think, it will be nine o'clock."

"I shall *think* all the time that you are sick," I continued, "and that you came out to-night to please me."

"I would do much more than that to contribute to your pleasure, my dear girl," said he, half-unconscious of his tone and manner, and imprinting a kiss upon my forehead.

My tears were as instantly dry as though their fountain was sealed. What was it? I had long been conscious of a pleasure when with him, that the presence of no other person produced. But now it seemed as if a liquid fire of happiness was coursing through my veins; and yet, I was unhappy. I did not forget that he was ill. But—oh, what or why was it? He had kissed me thousands of times. He often called me his "sweet Bel," and his "dear Bel." He had often expressed as much desire for my pleasure and happiness; and almost the only variation in the expression which had aroused the slumbering fire of my ardent nature, from thousands which had preceded it, was, he had called me his "dear *girl*," instead of "dear Bel." But that was not sufficient for the effect produced. An instant before I had thrown myself into his arms in childish unconsciousness; and now, I disengaged myself from them with my my face and neck crimsoned, my heart throbbing with emotion, and my veins thrilling with delight. I know not whether he noticed the transition, or whether he noticed the tremor of my frame (which I could not command) to my sorrow for his illness. But he did not seek to detain me; and immediately added in a voice, which had a slight degree of constraint in it,

"Come, Bel, you must go now; at nine o'clock we will start for home."

How quick I thought! There was no study, no delay; my plan arose as if by intuition, ready matured. Does love necessarily teach woman deceit?

"I will," I replied, "if you will give me your watch, so that I can know when it is nine, for I suppose that you had rather stay here alone, if you can, than go into the other room to be disturbed by our mirth."

He had replaced his elbow upon the table, and his face was shadowed by his hand, but, as he gave me the watch, I noticed that his hand slightly trembled. My first impulse was to repeat the exclamation "you are sick," and petition to go then; but I restrained myself, and immediately left the room.

The house was an old-fashioned country house, with long rambling rooms, which were almost ceiled by doors which connected the different parts in every direction. I was intimately acquainted with all its intricacies, and instead of returning to the company, or through the hall, the way I had been before, turned into a small closet, and, opening an opposite door, went through a bed-room into the kitchen, which was deserted by the whole family for the evening. The clock, which was a useful, rather than an ornamental piece of furniture in Mr. Hoskins's house, was ticking away with all the regularity that belongs to an old-fashioned time-piece, which has done its duty, without remissness, for a quarter of a century, and its hands marked that it wanted five minutes of eight. I took

up a book which lay near, and propping up the weight which carried the striking machinery, turned the hands around, until it wanted seventeen minutes of nine. That was the only positive evidence of the time in the house, excepting Esq. Smith's watch, which was safely concealed in my possession. I then retreated through a door in the rear of the kitchen, and passed round through the corner of the house into the garden, gathered some flowers, and appeared at one of the windows of the room where the company were, with them in my hand.

"Oh, here you are!" several exclaimed; "we have been looking for you." And in an instant, half-a-dozen of the girls were out in the garden after flowers. Each head and hand was decked, and then we obeyed the summons of our companions to "come now."

I had not been absent from that room fifteen minutes, and yet, how much had transpired in that short time. I had learned woman's sad lesson of feeling that mysterious sympathy which links being with being, and which, to her, begets that sadder lesson of necessity to woman's heart, to conceal and deceive. Even then, child as I was, one half hour before, with my heart throbbing with wild feelings of ecstasy, and my anxiety excited to the most painful degree by the illness of the one object in my thoughts—even then, to the observer, I was calm, gay, unconcerned, and the very soul of our frolics. As I passed a mirror and caught the reflection of my face, I saw that my eyes sparkled with a new light, and my cheek brightened by a deeper color; but to others this was but the excitement caused by the present scene. If they could have seen the heart! Not one thought was there; all was concentrated upon the part I had to *act*—yes, it was *acting*! And with the contingencies, I did not forget to make it appear natural. How long time seemed; and yet, I feared to go and look at the clock, lest they might suspect my anxiety to have it pass. No one noticed Esq. Smith's absence, for the older company, who occupied another room, supposed him with us; and the young hosts and guests thought him with the more sedate. But I watched my opportunity when I was sent into the hall to execute some penalty, to slip into the kitchen unobserved. The hands pointed to twelve minutes past nine. I turned the hand back to nine, removed the book, and returned to my young friends. Never had that good old clock made so many false signals in so short a time, and never before had a true heart studied its lesson of falsehood.

After showing myself so apt at expedients, it is not necessary to relate how that, in the most accidental manner, I discovered that it was nine o'clock! Nor how natural my exclamations were, "could it be possible!" "how provoking!" "where was Esq. Smith?" and the simplicity of my exclamation that he had "promised mother that I should start for home by nine o'clock." And while I was seeking my bonnet, I sent Billy to tell him that it was time, for "if I did not start at the time, mother never would let me go with them again." Oh, how much lying to gain one little half hour! And was the misery, which followed, a punishment for the departure from truth? Who can explain the mysteries of life? Why its pains? or why its enjoyments? Did God give us feelings to be as ashamed of them as we should be of crime? Is it instinct, or the falsehood of false education, which teaches woman to veil, to conceal, to *lie* about those sympathies in her nature, which were implanted by HIM who gave her being? If she has abused them—if she has sacrificed virtue at their shrine—if they have debased instead of ennobling her nature, I can

well see why she should conceal and deny. The thief does not avow his crime, nor the murderer his guilt. But when sympathy, feeling and passion remain pure—when they exalt and purify from selfishness, as they assuredly do, in their true exercise, I know not why the heart should shrink from acknowledging, even to itself, the emotions which thrill its pulsation. But it does; and the young heart feels a violence to its own nature to own that it *loves* in fervency and truth.

Our walk home was a silent one. I was confused and oppressed by the novel sensations which were developing in my breast, and I was alarmed at the illness of my companion. And his "headache" was sufficient pretext for silence, if he needed one for so being. As *our* clock struck nine, we reached the door.

"I thought that it was nine before we left Mr. Hoskins's," said my companion.

"It was by *their* clock," I replied.

He did not make any rejoinder to me, but advanced to my mother.

"Mrs. Cleaveland," said he, "you will acknowledge that I have returned Bel in good season."

Mother made some reply of surprise at the early hour by which we had arrived, and asked if the others came with us.

He replied in the negative, saying that he had been afflicted with a severe headache through the day, and that I consented to return early. And, bidding us good evening, he immediately took his leave.

That night, I could not sleep. I was glad to be alone; I wanted to think; and think I did, if the wild, passionate reveries of my brain, could be called *thought*. Towards morning, I sunk into a broken slumber, and my sleeping fancies took their shape from my waking ones. I thought I stood surrounded by one of the loveliest scenes that eye ever looked upon. I was enraptured, but could not enjoy the beauties spread out before me, until *he* also had seen it. I called him; in an instant he was by my side, but his countenance was clouded, and before I could inquire his displeasure, he disappeared, and I was alone; the beauty was gone; a fearful tempest raged around me, and in terror I awoke. The next day I neither saw, nor heard of him; and at dark I watched until my own tears but rendered the darkness more dreary, and then sought my pillow to conceal the bitter drops which I could not force back to their fountain.

A WOFUL PREDICAMENT.

GENTLE hearers or readers, whichever you may be, before I proceed to relate my mortifying adventure, I want to ask you one question. Do you ever forget both text and sermon, after having listened to both attentively?

I called on my pastor on Monday morning not long since; he had exchanged with a neighboring clergyman the Sabbath preceding, and, wishing to know something of the sermon, politely asked me to repeat the text. "Oh!" said I, "I cannot remember the text, but the sermon was delightful!" "Well then," said he, "please give me some sketch of it; what were the leading topics?"

I looked out at the window, up to the plastering, and down to the floor, but not a word could I remember.

He appeared not to notice my confusion, and changed the conversation to some different subject—but alas! *I could not forget the text which I had forgotten.* If “rosy, mantling blushes” make one beautiful, I was *awfully handsome* for about five minutes. I soon departed, though they urged me to stay longer; but I have not yet been able to recall the text.

Was I ever more mortified? I have no doubt but the preacher supposed I was thinking of my new bonnet, but it was not so. To be sure I *had* a new one, but I kept it before me all day, Saturday, that I might not think of it in sermon time. I thought I was sufficiently mortified, but had not received all my punishment yet. Yesterday, I went to church determined to remember every idea, and surely I did; I might give it to you verbatim, had I time; so pointedly did it come home to me, that I can never forget it.

What do you think the sermon was about? one principal thing was—forgetting *texts*! The preacher looked directly at me, at least I thought he did. He remarked that he did not mean to be personal, but if it referred to any person, they might say, “It is I!” Involuntarily, I half rose in my seat, to say, “It is I!” but, recollecting where I was, I sat down again. After service, I went to him, and humbly told him that it *was* I.

Good friends, pity me, and always remember the text. DELVANA.

It is so short a time since the writer of this “Predicament” was in the mills, that we hardly think an apology necessary for inserting it.—ED.

GERTRUDE.

GERTRUDE LOVEJOY was the daughter of poor parents, residing in a small, but romantic town, in the old Bay State. Shall I say she was beautiful? Yes, she was beautiful. But she possessed little of that beauty so much admired by many at the present day. She was small, but well formed; her features were neither extremely handsome, nor extremely homely; and her auburn hair was combed plainly, and smoothly, over a lofty brow. Her lips were not like ruby, and her cheeks were not tinged with the rosy glow of health, but she possessed a mild blue eye that spoke volumes, while the tongue remained silent. She had never had the advantages of a superior education, and therefore possessed few of those accomplishments deemed so essential to a lady of modern times. But she had studied the beauties of nature, and the goodness of God; and hers was that beauty of the mind, that wears not away with age; that remains unscathed by time, unfettered by prejudice, uninfluenced by the love of popularity. The days of her childhood were spent happily, for she had never dreamed of wo, or realized that earth bore up one sorrowing heart. She had loved her home, the old-fashioned cottage with its low roof, the spacious gardens on either side, with their fruit trees, vegetables and flowers; a plat of grass in front, and in the back-ground a small hill and lily-pond; and besides these, at a short distance, a beautiful pine grove, and church-yard.

In summer she loved to ramble in the woods and fields, to pick berries, and cull the pretty wild flowers to make a *boquet* for her mother. In winter sometimes she would repeat little hymns she had learned, sometimes watch the snowbirds as they hopped from branch to branch, and sometimes amuse herself at play with her favorite speckled kitten. Thus passed the brief, but sunny days of her childhood. Shadows were hovering around her, but she knew it not. Her heart was full of glee, and her joyous song was rendered beautiful by the touching melody of her rich voice; earth seemed a paradise to her, rife with joy. And bitter was the hour when she was made to realize that grief, that lawless intruder, had taken up his abode among the sons and daughters of men, and she was forced to drink of the cup which he had turned out for her. Gradually did the joys of life begin to fade to her view, as she advanced from childhood to womanhood. Every thing appeared strangely new to her: not that Earth had lost all its charms, but she now found sorrow and affliction mingled with what she had once supposed happiness.

At the time of which I write, those moderate and willing murderers—in other words, *rum-sellers*—were deemed to be people of as kind hearts, and good principles, as other men; though it was not unfrequently the case, that a poor female, deprived of all that could render life happy or desirable by the intemperance of her husband, would dare plead that the baneful beverage might be withheld from him, but she was looked upon as a bold woman, and her entreaties were in vain; even while her children were suffering around her for food and clothing. While he, whom she fondly loved, and whom she had wedded in her early days, with the prospect of peace and plenty, was spending his days in dissipation, regardless of the wants and sufferings of his family.

Such were the severe trials of Gertrude's mother; and had it not been for the joys and consolations of religion, she might have sunk beneath their weight; but she was a woman of great fortitude and sound principles, and she resolved, trusting in God, that she would try to do her duty, as far as it was made plain to her. She strove to instil good principles into the minds of her children, to bring them up in such a way that the world might be benefitted by their existence. And not only to fit them for ornaments in society here, but for the society of angels and the pure bliss of heaven hereafter; and she lived long enough to see that her exertions had not been in vain. Gertrude was her eldest. She had been the sharer of her joys and sorrows, and had offered her that sympathy which is so gladly received in the hour of trial. She saw her a young lady, amiable, beloved and respected, and then, bidding adieu to them all, and all she held dear on earth, she departed in peace, to commence a new life of unbounded happiness, at God's right hand.

Thus deprived of a mother, and a mother's counsel, Gertrude sought happiness in striving to diffuse it around her, and in alleviating the sorrows, and adding to the comforts of her younger brothers and sisters. Her many excellent qualities had remained, as it were, shrouded in oblivion, for few eyes saw them save those of the nearest kindred. But now that her dear mother slumbered in the embrace of death, she felt that she was called upon to act a woman's part, and the beauties of her mind shone forth to the surprise and admiration even of strangers. True, she was poor, but she was contented and happy, for she rejoiced in doing good; and many were the hearts that bounded with gratitude, invoking the choic-

est of Heaven's blessings upon her, as she entered with careful step the apartments of the sick and the dying.

She entered not the circles of wealth, gait and fashion; but her presence was thought essential to the cheerfulness and enjoyment of the little circle in her own neighborhood, composed of young ladies who assembled themselves together in the afternoon, once in three weeks, to sew for charitable purposes, and were joined in the evening by gentlemen.

At one of these circles she became acquainted with a young man who was much esteemed by his associates for his kindness and generosity; their acquaintance ripened into friendship; he became a constant visitor at her residence; and after the lapse of a few months ventured to offer her his hand in marriage. She accepted the offer, and looked forward with joyful anticipations to the prospect of spending her life with one whom she had every occasion to believe would ever remain her most sincere friend. She well knew that many new duties and responsibilities awaited her, but she never borrowed trouble, and resolved she would be happy while she could. Walter Williams became the husband of Gertrude Lovejoy.

It was at that season of the year when nature puts off her robe of snowy white for one of beautiful green, that we entered a small cottage by the wayside, where, in a darkened room, lay the form of one whom death was about to claim as his own. It was Gertrude. But a few years had passed since her marriage, and she had drained the cup of affliction to its very dregs. She had borne all her trials with a meek and submissive spirit, and her life was now terminating with a severe and protracted illness. She did not fear death, for she had chosen Christ for her friend; and, with calmness and resignation, rejoicing in the hope of eternal happiness, she bade farewell to her kindred and friends, to her husband and children, who received her parting blessing, and her spirit took its flight to a better world. Thus passed away the lovely Gertrude. The rose-tree blossoms over her grave, and her early friends often visit it to think of her they so much loved, who sleeps within; whose life was so exemplary, and whose death was so happy.

LAURA.

We do not think that this sketch needs any apologies; but we would like to increase the reader's interest by adding, that the writer is one who has enjoyed but few of the advantages so common among our country girls. The corrections have been very slight indeed.—ED.

THE OLD VILLAGE CHURCH.

How does fond memory love to linger around the scenes of early childhood; when the heart was filled with joy, and all creation was budding with promise; when the mind was free from care and sorrow, and nought but peace and happiness dwelt in our bosoms. But the one most beloved, one endeared by every sacred tie, and long to be remembered after other scenes have been obliterated from memory's fair page, is the *Old Village Church*. It would be in vain to attempt to describe the thousand recollections that cluster around that loved spot. Well do I remember the sensation awakened within my young heart when the last footfall was heard

retreating from the long aisle, and nought was heard save the rustling of the leaves as the gentle breeze passed through the branches of the lofty trees that surrounded the church; when the aged Minister arose with heavenly serenity beaming in his countenance, whose clear and silvery tones sent a thrill to every heart as he read a portion of scripture, and then offered a deep and fervent prayer which seemed to reach the high court of heaven, and bring the blessing down to every waiting heart. Then came the swelling notes of the organ, mingling sweetly with the rich and melodious voices of the choir.

And ah! methinks I now behold those aged sires and mothers in Israel, all in their respective places; those whose heads had blossomed for the tomb since that ancient structure had stood as a beacon to the wayward traveller, who was journeying to another world, a city not in sight. Within those sacred walls many a smiling infant has been consecrated to God, who has since arrived to manhood, and gone forth as a herald of the cross, proclaiming "Good news and glad tidings, peace on earth and good-will to men."

ANGELINE.

H A P P I N E S S .

THERE is nothing more earnestly sought after and ardently desired, by every human being, than happiness; and, in accordance with this, every thing that yieldeth pleasure, evasive though it may be, is tried, till the soul cries out in the agony of despair, "O that I were happy! O that joy would once more be mine!"

Mankind has sought for this in light and trifling pleasures which may have answered for a time, and perhaps were well in their places, but eventually they have vanished and left those, who have leaned thereon for support, to fall helpless and unnerved to the earth, and wo to him, who thinks to find a permanent resting place beneath the shadow of their airy wing. This cannot be, for happiness cometh not of outward things, but wellet up from the fount within, from the pure and gentle heart, and of this only is it begotten. Can we expect sweet waters from a bitter fountain; or pure happiness to emanate from a corrupt heart, actuated by corrupt motives? Be assured it cannot be thus; there is no such thing as happiness in wrong doing. It dwells not in the dark abode of sin, and holds no communion with vice; though, for a moment, it may flit around Pleasure's gay and heartless throng, yet it dwells not there, but soars aloft on white wings to the clear blue heaven of virtue and innocence, and illumines, with rays of celestial light, the true and upright soul. Then those who would be happy must seek the treasure within their own bosoms; they must subdue passion, conquer sin, and make the issues of their own lives beautiful. So shall happiness, rich as mortal may know on earth, be theirs; and the fire, which she shall kindle on the altars of their hearts, shall burn till their souls wind their way, far above clouds and storms, to that better world "which eye hath not seen," and there be merged in the perfect and eternal happiness of heaven. True, outward circumstances over which he has no control, may combine to mar his happiness, and throw their dark shadows above and around him; yet no gloom

of theirs can so darken and chill the spirit within, as the blackness of despair, the groanings of remorse that guilt ever brings. Over these the truly good man grieves, and sorrows that sin and wrong should so mar the beauty of this fair earth; but this he trusts shall soon pass away, and, as he heavenward lifts up the tearful eye, but trusting heart, bright glimpses of the glorious future burst on its rapturous vision; and peace, with her olive branch, passes over his wounded spirit, rich with the healing balm; while a strong deep and holy current, that cometh from the consciousness of right, pervades his whole being, and happiness, for which he has laid a firm foundation, is still his, true happiness, built upon the right foundation, which nought can take away. 'Tis the foretaste of the joys of heaven, and, like the still small voice that fell on the listening prophet's ear, speaks in tones of love to the rapt soul, of its own bright and glorious home, far beyond the blue skies. A word for you, ye seekers after happiness. Seek for it in your own bosom; strive to purify your hearts and live truly good and blessed lives, not for self alone, but for those around you; and then shall the object, for which ye have so long sought, be thine.

L. B.

EDITORIAL.

AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL. Sometime since we mentioned a very prevalent wish among our patrons to know more of the writers as individuals—more of their personal character—more of the influences under which they had been educated, and brought forward as writers. We suggested to our contributors to gratify this wish, so far as it was reasonable, and they appear willing, but say they do not know how to write an auto-biography; they “do not know what to tell, and what to leave out.” “If you will commence, we will follow.”

We hardly know whether we should be able to judge precisely of the things best to tell, and those which had best be omitted; but, if we err, we think it had better be in errors of omission than of commission. But there is a curiosity that would not be well pleased with an article too concise and cautious. We have frequently been amused by the visits to our *sanctum* of those who did not appear to imagine that “The Offering’s Editress” had any conception of the courtesy due to ladies in general, and questions, which, in any other situation, would not be answered on account of their impertinence, have received very patient and frank replies.

But we have not considered as impertinent the visits and letters of some who ask, “Why did you come to Lowell? Had you ever written before you came here? What first suggested the idea of writing for the public,” &c., &c. We do not hesitate to answer candidly and publicly these questions.

So now to commence. I was born in the year 18—O no!—that will never do! must teach the others better than this what to *omit*.

The writer’s birth and earliest education was in the Granite State, in the beautiful town of C——, upon the banks of the Connecticut, and within sight of the Green Mountains of Vermont. Although she left this place when but a little child, yet she still remembers the impression made upon her mind by its natural beauties. The broad and beautiful Connecticut, with its broad and beautiful green meadows—Sugar river winding among its glossy-leaved maples, or tumbling over its frothy falls—Ascutney, lifting its blue head towards the clouds, with its jewelling of rocks glistening in the light of a noonday sun—the distant hills of Vermont—all these are painted with unfading tints upon the tablet of memory. Quite as distinctly does she remember the broad village plain, the octagon churches at the head of it—of one her father was then the pastor—the school-house, and HOME, with its log aqueduct—Barney-sweet apple-tree—and the strawberry hill behind it.

She learned to read by her mother’s sick bed, before she was old enough and

strong enough to attend school. She cannot remember of this, though she has not entirely forgotten the extensive assortment of hymns she learned from a domestic in the family. Some of these were Methodist hymns, some were WATTS' DIVINE SONGS, and some were very good; and that is all she knows about them. She can vividly remember the delight with which she pored over MRS. BARBAULD'S HYMNS IN PROSE, and the tears she profusely shed over WICKED SARAH.

When about six years of age her father removed from this beautiful place to one with scarcely any natural advantages, and nothing but a good academy to recommend it as a residence. At the same time disease, both of body and mind, deprived her, with seven other little ones, of a mother's care and guidance—a blessing which since that time they have never fully enjoyed. Four little girls, one an epileptic, and herself an asthmatic; four young boys, one an infant, were in a most painful manner deprived of a mother's care: and that mother for years an anxious burden upon them, and their invalid father. But childhood is careless and happy, and theirs was still a merry home.

How many ways there were to occupy and amuse themselves. There was the school, at which *she* was anxious to be the best scholar; there was the Juvenile Society, with its library, of which she was a member; and then there were fields, lanes and woods to play and ramble in.

With regard to personal appearance she can remember little. She is said to have been very small, very round in limbs and features, with feet so small that the first specimen of her knitting was kept as a curiosity—with large violet-blue eyes, which attracted much attention, and "flaxen hair." Alas for the changes which Time has made! How have the feet expanded, and the eyes comparatively contracted! The "lint-white locks" are now a very uninteresting brown, and the violet orbs have turned gray.

In disposition she was sprightly; docile, through deference, not from want of will, and very peaceable—seldom aroused to anger, but when this was the case she was "a little fury." She was active but not strong; a sufferer from her childhood's complaint until she was twelve or thirteen years of age, and after that for several years inclining to consumption.

This is mentioned because many think that she must have brought an exuberant quantity of health to Lowell, to enable her to withstand so long the effects of factory labor. She never enjoyed such uninterrupted good health as since she has lived in this city, but is aware that Lowell must seem a different place to those who have come here but to lose their health, strength and spirits.

But though sometimes sick, even to the verge of the grave, she was never humored, petted and *cosseted*. She was out of the sick-bed into the school-house, or on the play-ground, and can remember going with her father through the snow-drifts to school, when her only way to get along was literally to "follow in the footsteps of her predecessor." Though fond of books she did not confine herself to them; but *play-houses*, in doors and out of doors, with their barns, outhouses, chambers, cupboards, ovens, and all the *et ceteras*, occupied much of her time, not omitting however, the inhabitants thereof, whose names were *Legion*. They were men and maidens, women and children, and their extensive wardrobes gave ample employment to her needle. The rag babies with their make-believe housekeeping, occupied her until her elder sister really feared it was to become one of the occupations of maturer years. She did not give it up, however, until her sister, three years younger than herself, could no longer be persuaded to be called the proprietor of the baby-house. But the dolls had their rivals—her whole heart was not absorbed in the mimic home. If she could get a story book, the babies might go without food, drink and clothing, until it was read through; and to go berrying, to swing, to see-saw, to see who could run farthest and fastest, to slide, to get the boys' sleds when they were out of sight, and coast down hill, to do these and many other things, which a watchful mamma would entirely have prohibited, contributed nevertheless to her physical improvement, perhaps with no permanent detriment to her mind.

She read with avidity all the books, suited in the least degree to her age, which came in her way, and indeed many more. Her craving for works of fiction was a cause of much solicitude and reproof from her good father, who sometimes locked up the novels she had borrowed, and expressed his earnest disapprobation of their contents. In the family library there were three religious novels, which she perused and reperused to her heart's content. They were *Thornton Abbey*, *Religious Courtship*, and *The Velvet Cushion*. *Pilgrim's Progress* was one of her great favorites. The day when she first saw *Robinson Crusoe* is never to be forgotten; and

she went a mile from home, on cold winter evenings, to read through an edition of *Fairy Tales* which were borrowed by a little friend.

Perhaps few little girls evinced more versatility of taste and capacity than she did. Picking whortleberries, dressing dolls, school-lessons, scouring the knives, making patchwork, Scott's novels, *Paradise Lost*, climbing apple-trees, and "taking care of little brother," might all come in one day; or if it was Saturday, she might, in addition, have to be one of the *committee* of the Juvenile Society, or be requested to read at one of their meetings. That Juvenile Society! Is it still in existence? The ninepenny tax, levied at its annual meeting, is it still collected from the children of A——?

When eleven and twelve years of age "the natives" were all astonished by the introduction of a preceptress into the academy. The writer now had an opportunity to take lessons in embroidery, drawing, painting, French language, &c. The latter season, however, she was so much debilitated that all her lessons were studied at home upon her bed. Latin had previously received a very little attention, and this was almost the last opportunity she ever enjoyed to acquire some of the *accomplishments*.

And now, as correctly as memory will allow, she will relate her experience as a writer. She was a very little girl when she one day heard her brother and sister enjoined, by their father and tutor, to prepare a composition for an academical examination. She solicited permission to write, which was granted, and chose *Winter* for her subject. She was delighted with her exploit, and others also looked amused and gratified. After this she wrote compositions quite readily, and with much regularity.

Her first attempt at poetry was while lying upon a sick bed, from which she feared she should never arise. She must have been then about twelve years of age. It was not an *attempt*, however, for there was no effort connected with it. The words came of their own accord. We give it without the correction of a single letter.

A few more days, and I am gone. Gone where?
 My body 'neath the cold damp clod, fit food
 For worms. My soul in an unseen, an unknown world.
 And shall I leave no memory sweet behind,
 Like fragrance of the dying rose, which spreads its
 Faded leaves towards the zephyr, as 't far off bears
 The aromatic gale? Ah, no! Perhaps some low small stone,
 Erected o'er the last remains, will tell
 The passing traveller the name and age,
 The birth and death of her who was, but now
 Is not. And oh, will this be all? It may
 Be that a few, a very few, of childhood's
 Loved companions will sometimes cast a look
 Upon the days, long since gone by, and think of
 Harriet.

After this she ventured to write in albums, and succeeded better perhaps in rhyme. Contributions from her were much sought in those "repositories of friendship," and she has preserved a very few of these "first efforts." There is no originality about them, and the following are specimens of the whole.

TO SARAH.

Dear Sarah, now to tell the truth,
 My poetry is very bad,
 But then my prose is still much worse,
 So that no other can be had.
 If when these lines do meet your eyes,
 You do begin to criticise,
 So many faults will come to view
 You'll find you have some work to do.
 But if you will with candor read 'em,
 And let the faults all go for nothing,
 I'm sure you'll very much oblige me,
 And for it I shall better love ye.

We have met and we've parted; we may ne'er meet again
Till we meet where there ne'er shall be parting or pain;
O then may we meet, and eternity spend
Where friendship and happiness never shall end.

TO PRISCILLA.

We have met and we've parted; we may ne'er meet again
In this valley o changing with pleasure and pain,
But may the remembrance of this meeting be
As cherished in thy heart as 't will e'er be with me.

We have met and we've parted; how often 't is so
That affections, which just are beginning to blow,
Are nipped in the bud by that chill hand of Fate
Which the long, long beloved will so oft separate.

We have met and we've parted; we may meet again
Even here. We will hope—and perhaps not in vain;
But should we ne'er meet, Priscilla, oft look
At the name which is traced on this page of your book.

But, after writing for her friends, her powers were frequently called into requisition by those for whom she cared nothing at all. In an hour of ill humor, she wrote the following:

THE ALBUM.

'And now bring the paper, the book, and the pen;
'Let us fill up the album—with what?
'Bright thoughts I have none—no matter! for them;
'Useless in such a place would be thought.

'What a fool was Miss Tracey, to ask me to write,
'When she knows I hate her, and her book;
'And then she spoiled mine—though she scrawled but a mite,
'Yet it's blotted all over—just look!

'I suppose I *must* write—and she'll show it all round,
'So I will do my best—though my worst
'Is what she deserves, for spoiling mine bound
'In a cover, which much money cost.'

She sits a few moments, her hand on her brow,
And anger with thought mingled there,
Then she takes up the book, and lightly she now
Draws her hand o'er the pages so fair.

TO MISS ANN TRACEY.

'Dear Ann, we must part—and O with you go
'The choicest of blessings Heaven has to bestow;
'May the joys which you share be lasting and bright,
'And Sorrow's dark cloud never darken thy sight.
'Would Heaven but listen, and answer my prayer,
'How perfect the happiness my Anna should share;
'But ah, when I haply petition in vain
'Unanswered I'll bend, and petition again.
'When thou art away, and other friends smile,
'And others' fond arts thy cares shall beguile,
'Then think there is one who oft sighs for thee,
'And those sighs with that thought rewarded shall be.
'But remember me not when the lighted hall
'Glow's bright with the beauty of the midnight ball;
'But think of me oft in the silent hour,
'When the mind is awakened to friendship's power;
'Then look on these lines, and think of the friend
'Who traced them as tokens of love ne'er to end.'

Thus much for the first efforts at prose and poetry. In the next number the auto-biography shall be concluded. H. F.